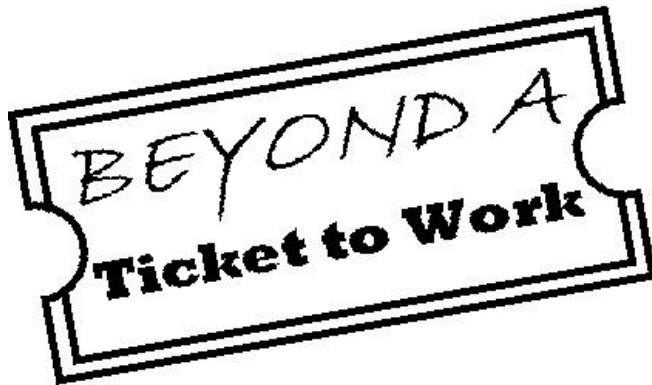


AccessLetter

**Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities**

Panel Discussion Takes Audience "*Beyond a Ticket to Work*"

On Wednesday, October 9th, the Commission for Persons with Disabilities and the Employees' Committee on Diversity will host a forum on strategies to increase employment among individuals with disabilities.



Often, when workers are disabled by injuries or chronic health conditions they may no longer be able to do the jobs for which they had training or work in the same environmental setting. To receive Social Security benefits or insurance payments (SSI and SSDI) they have to be classified as being "too disabled to work."

The truth is that many people with disabilities want to work and could very capably handle the tasks of a different type position, or a job in a different setting or with certain accommodations. Having a job means a lot more than a paycheck. Being employed can have a positive effect on a person's self esteem and sense of contribution to their household, and on the whole community.

Ticket to Work and the *Work Incentives Improvement Act* (TWWIIA) introduced a range of new federal programs that seek to expand the

choices that SSI/SSDI disability recipients have in obtaining appropriate rehabilitation and vocational services. These two programs also remove the restrictions that in the past meant people would lose essential government health care coverage once they became gainfully employed, even on a part-time or minimum wage basis.

Come to an engaging discussion at 5:30 p.m. on October 9 to learn more about the potential TWWIIA programs provide as well as strategies to deal with their limitations. This evening event will take place in the ballroom of the Citywide Senior Center at 806 Massachusetts Avenue across from City Hall in Cambridge. Take the Central Square stop on the MBTA Red Line subway, or take one of the following MBTA bus routes to Central Square: 1, 47, 64, 70, 70A, 83, and 91. There will be music by Tunefoolery Concert Ensembles and light refreshments will be served.

EEOC Issues Handbook to Help Small Business Comply with Disabilities Act

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recently issued a new handbook designed to help small businesses comply with the employment provisions of the ADA.



Entitled *The Americans with Disabilities Act: A Primer for Small Business*, this practical, reader-friendly handbook outlines various employment

aspects of the ADA as they relate to employers, employees, and job applicants.

“Since Title I of the ADA was implemented a decade ago, we have seen a lot of progress, but there is still a tremendous need for education,” said EEOC Chair Cari M. Dominguez. “Small businesses are a major source of jobs in this country - jobs for which people with disabilities must be given an equal opportunity to compete. Never before has the small business community had such easy access to information about the ADA.”

Offering examples, tips, and “do's and don'ts,” the handbook covers the following:

- Who is protected by Title I of the ADA;
- How to avoid mistakes when interviewing applicants with disabilities;
- When an employer is permitted to ask an employee questions about a medical condition;
- What to do if safety issues arise;
- The obligation to make reasonable accommodations to the limitations of qualified applicants and employees with disabilities; and
- Tax incentives for businesses that hire and retain people with disabilities.

Resource lists are included in the handbook to help small employers recruit individuals with disabilities and obtain assistance in making reasonable accommodations. According to statistics from the Small Business Administration, approximately 25 million small businesses in the United States represent 99.7 percent of all employers, employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, and generate more than half of the nation's gross domestic product. Nationwide, small businesses also provide 67 percent of all first jobs.

While the ADA covers employers with a minimum of 15 employees, Massachusetts law prohibits disability discrimination by employers with six or more employees. Businesses of this size typically do not have human resources or legal departments

to provide them advice on the ADA, so smaller employers often turn to resources such as this handbook for guidance. The handbook, along with other useful ADA information, is available on the EEOC web site at www.eeoc.gov, or by calling (202) 663-4900 voice or (202) 663-4494 TTY. Cambridge-based businesses may obtain a free copy by contacting the Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

Conference Slated on Universal Design for the World Wide Web

As the importance of the Internet increases, so does the need to make its content available to more diverse audiences. These audiences use a variety of technologies to access the Web, ranging from traditional browsers on desktop computers to portable, hand-held devices, cell phones and hands-free devices. The need to accommodate these users through more universal Web design strategies grows with every new technology that is introduced. Web developers who ignore the emerging trend toward multiple-environment Internet access will be left to lament their inability to reach important segments of the population.

Web Design

that Works for Everyone

One important segment that will benefit from universal design is the disability community. Unfortunately, not enough attention is given to the principles of universal Web design to provide individuals with disabilities with the same standard of access to the Internet as the rest of the population.

Although the problem of Web inaccessibility may be most poignant to the disability community, it won't be long before those without disabilities begin to complain that their favorite Web site is inaccessible from a cell phone or another device.

Web Design that Works for Everyone is a two-day conference, October 18 & 19, on the campus of the

Rhode Island School of Design (RISD in Providence, RI. Being co-sponsored by Adaptive Environments Center and RISD, this conference will feature hands-on sessions for learning practical tools as well as plenary presentations. If the promise of accessible digital media is to be realized, it needs good designers.

September 30 is the DEADLINE is for early-registration conference fees of \$300 for both days or \$200 for one day. For more information check the Adaptive Environments website at www.AdaptiveEnvironments.org/webconference and see the Oct. 18-19 listing in the Calendar section of this newsletter.

"Somebody Should Do Something!"

The Commission frequently hears this refrain, referring to access problems from people with disabilities, their friends and families, and others. Oftentimes, people believe their complaints aren't being heard, or they just aren't sure where to report a problem. Other times, people may want to send a complement that a problem was corrected promptly or just to report a job well done. Here is a handy list of people to whom concerns or commendations should be directed.

Accessibility in new construction and renovation of existing buildings:

Thomas Hopkins, Acting Director
Massachusetts Architectural Access Board
One Ashburton Place, Room 1310
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
617-727-0660 voice/TTY,
1-800-828-7222 toll-free voice/TTY
Printable complaint forms online at:
www.state.ma.us/aab

Curb ramps and sidewalks in Cambridge:

Bill Dwyer, Superintendent of Streets and Sidewalks
Cambridge Department of Public Works
147 Hampshire Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

By email: wdwyer@ci.cambridge.ma.us
617-349-4800 voice, 617-349-4805 TTY

Disability discrimination in Cambridge (employment, housing, public accommodations):

Quoc Tran, Director
Cambridge Human Rights Commission
51 Inman Street, second floor
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
By email: qtran@ci.cambridge.ma.us
617-349-4396 voice, 617-492-0235 TTY

MBTA Subways, Buses, and "THE RIDE":

Michael Mulhern, General Manager
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Ten Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts 02116
Online complaint form available at:
www.mbta.com/writetotop.cfm

Kathy Cox, Manager of Fixed Route Services (bus, subway, commuter rail, boat)
MBTA Office for Transportation Access at Back Bay Station
145 Dartmouth Street, Boston, MA 02116
By email: kcox@mbta.com
617-222-5976 voice, 800-543-8287 toll-free,
617-222-5854 TTY

Bob Rizzo, Manager of Paratransit Contract Operations ("THE RIDE")
MBTA Office for Transportation Access
Ten Park Plaza, Room 4730, Boston, MA 02116
By email: rrizzo@mbta.com
617-222-5123 voice, 800-533-6282 toll-free,
617-222-5415 TTY

In general, complaint or commendation letters or emails should be brief and to the point. Provide as much specific information as you can: dates, times, incidents, who said what, etc.

Try to limit the number of complaint or commendation points to one or two per letter. Always feel free to forward a copy to the local disability commission of the city or town in which the event occurred (in Cambridge, that would be us!)

NEWS BRIEFS

People with Disabilities Benefit from New CommonHealth Employment Connection

CommonHealth Employment Connection (CHEC) helps individuals with disabilities obtain access to health insurance and health services that will make it easier for them to enter, re-enter or stay in the workplace. Formerly called the Office of Health Care Coordination, the new name reflects the office's collaboration with the Massachusetts Division of Medical Assistance (DMA), and in particular, their MassHealth / CommonHealth insurance program that helps members obtain the coverage they need to regain or maintain employment.

Because each individual's situation is unique, it can be helpful to consult with a CHEC Health and Employability Coordinator who can explain the benefits for which the person may be eligible. CHEC staff can answer questions about the MassHealth/CommonHealth application process.

The new office is at 2 Boylston Street in Boston and is open from 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday. The toll free telephone numbers are 1-866-698-6901 or 1-866-698-6900 (TTY).

Remembering John Fernandes

John Fernandes, former Chair of the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities, died on September 4, 2002. Gail Enman, who was Executive Director of the Commission during that period remembers that John, "demonstrated enormous compassion for his peers and was a strong but gentle advocate." He was an active member of Sacred Heart Church and served on the SCM Transportation Board of Directors from 1988 to 1998, and as Vice President from 1989-1991.

In honor of John's enthusiasm for life and staunch support of their work, a memorial fund has been set up at SCM Transportation, 167 Holland Street in Somerville, MA 02144. John leaves two sisters, Agnes Padon of Florida and Mrs. Lester (Teresa) Young of 5 Phyllis Drive in Randolph, MA 02368 where expressions of sympathy may be sent.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

- Sept. 28 **Cycling Clinic in Wompatuck State Park.** Feel the wind blow through your hair and the power beneath your seat as you learn the basics of cycling and how to cycle the most efficiently. Handcycles are available for participants who use wheelchairs; tandem bikes and traditional bicycles also available. Fee: \$50. For registration and accommodations call Outdoor Explorations at (781) 395-4999 voice / 781-395-4184 TTY or at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>.
- Oct. 1-2 **Community Access Monitor Training in Natick, MA.** Help your community become more accessible by taking this 2-day workshop on the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) regulations and ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Get hands-on practice doing site surveys. Registration fee is \$15 for consumers, \$75 for professionals. DEADLINE is two weeks prior to the event if you are requesting accommodations For more information, call Bruce Bruneau at Massachusetts Office on Disability, 617-727-7440 voice/TTY. [also in Roxbury, Nov. 13-14]
- Oct. 2 **Loss and Grief: Supporting Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and Their Caregivers**, an all day conference in Marlborough, MA presented by the Bay State Developmental Disabilities Nurse Network but open to other professionals and interested parties. Registration is \$60 before Sept. 25 / \$70 after Sept. 25 for non-members. For more information contact Ann Smith at 508-528-7798 voice or <asmith4@attbi.com>.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community (continued)

- Oct. 2 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, peer support group for women with physical or emotional disabilities and/or chronic conditions meets at The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 2–3:30 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. Wheelchair accessible; contact Mary Quinn at 617-354-8807 or woman@braintrust.org for more information.
- Oct. 2 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in group** (information & support) on first Wednesday of each month, 6-8 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Bookstore, 5th floor conference room, Kenmore Square in Boston. Call 617-247-6827 for information.
- Oct. 3 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor conference room, 5:30 –7:00 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment. [NOTE: Meeting is on the first Thursday this month.]
- Oct. 5 **Rocks & Ropes Clinic** uses techniques and modifications so teens of all abilities can participate. Work in small groups where qualified instructors guide you through the basics of using equipment and climbing. For registration and accommodations call Outdoor Explorations at (781) 395-4999 voice / 781-395-4184 TTY or at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>.
- Oct. 5-6 **Mt. Greylock Summit Hike** at North Adams. Join Venture Into Well-Being for a group hike up Massachusetts' highest peak with dinner afterwards, overnight accommodations, and breakfast the next morning at Bascom Lodge on the mountaintop. Previous attendance in the trails program usually required to participate. Participants pay for accommodations and meals. For further information or to register, contact Marcy Marchello, Universal Access Program Coordinator for the Dept. of Environmental Management, 413-545-5758 voice/tty or Marcy.Marchello@state.ma.us.
- Oct. 6 **Family Adventure Day at Hale Reservation** is a free environmental education program by Outdoor Explorations for people of all ages and abilities. Catch tadpoles and learn about the ecology of the forest and pond. For registration and accommodations call Outdoor Explorations at (781) 395-4999 voice / 781-395-4184 TTY or at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>.
- Oct. 8 **Accessible Hiking at Wells State Park** in Sturbridge. This outdoor fall foliage event is sponsored by the Universal Access Program of the Dept. of Environmental Management. Contact Brenda Kennedy at 413-259-0009 or Marcy.Marchello@state.ma.us for more information.
- Oct. 8 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software that meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in Building 2, Room 143. There is often a guest speaker. Meeting time is 7:30 -9:30 p.m. Go to their webpage at <http://harvee.billerica.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/boston-voice-users> and click on Boston-voice-users Archives to find out more about meetings and discussions.
- Oct. 9 **Beyond a Ticket to Work** an panel discussion on the opportunities and problems with the new "Ticket to Work" and work incentives programs for SSI/SSDI recipients, 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Citywide Senior Center, 806 Mass. Avenue in Cambridge. [see front page article for detailed information.]
- Oct. 10 **LD/ADHD Consumer Group** for persons with Learning Disabilities/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is sponsored by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and meets at MRC Somerville Area Office at 5 Middlesex Ave., Suite 302 in Somerville. Business

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community (continued)

meeting 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Support Group 12-1 p.m. For more information contact Jim Fratolillo at 617-204-3854 (voice), 617-204-3847 fax or Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3118 (voice).

- Oct. 10 **Wild Work at Southwest Corridor Park** Participate in urban gardening and park improvement with people of all abilities at the Southwest Corridor Park. For registration and accommodations call Outdoor Explorations at (781) 395-4999 voice / 781-395-4184 TTY or at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>.
- Oct. 10 **Stroke Support Group** at the Cambridge Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave. in Cambridge, 6-7:30 p.m. For more information contact Melissa Terrien at 800-922-8290, x343.
- Oct. 12-14 **Teen Backpacking Adventure in the Berkshires** Explore the rugged beauty of the Berkshires on this three-day backpacking adventure for teens with and without disabilities. Spend two nights under the stars, sleeping in tents or Trail shelters while we hike a section of the 2130 mile long Appalachian Trail. Experience the beauty of hiking through a New England Fall and meet some new friends along the way. Time: 8am Saturday to 5pm Monday. Fee: \$250. For registration and accommodations call Outdoor Explorations at (781) 395-4999.
- Oct. 15 **Accessible Hiking at Wells State Park** in Sturbridge. This outdoor fall foliage event is sponsored by the Universal Access Program of the Dept. of Environmental Management. Contact Brenda Kennedy at 413-259-0009 or Marcy.Marchello@state.ma.us for more information.
- Oct. 15 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting, 1-3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, Boston. For more information call Robert Snierson, Chair, at 617-338-6665 voice / 617-338-6662 TTY or Mary Lou Maloney at 617-216-5181.
- Oct. 16 **National Disability Mentoring Day** offers employers a chance to discover the talent and productivity people with disabilities can contribute to their businesses and provides individuals with disabilities an opportunity to learn more about career options. This year's theme is "Career Development for the 21st Century." Check out the web site of the American Association of People with Disabilities at <www.aapd.com>.
- Oct. 16 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, (see Oct. 2 listing for details.)
- Oct. 18-19 **Web Design that Works for Everyone**, a two-day conference at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in Providence, RI and co-sponsored by Adaptive Environments of Boston. [see article with same title in this issue for more information] Registration fees before Sept. 30 DEADLINE are \$300 regular / \$199 student for Friday and Saturday or \$200 / \$125 for one day only. After Sept. 30 the fees are \$400 for both days or \$250 for one day. Contact Lenie Kuit at 617-695-1225, ext. 29 (voice/tty) or <lkuit@AdaptiveEnvironments.org>.
- Oct. 23 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room 4. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information or to request interpreters. For problems with The RIDE service, call 617-222-5123 voice, or 617-222-5415 TTY.
- Oct. 23 **Use of Medication in Children & Adolescents with Special Needs**, a presentation by Gerald H. Margolis, MD (psychiatrist), sponsored by Special Needs Services Department of the

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community (continued)

Jewish Community Centers (JCC) of Greater Boston. Discussion will focus on current treatments for ADD, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder and developmental disabilities. 7-9:30 pm at Leventhal-Sidman JCC, 333 Nahanton St. in Newton. Registration is \$5 for JCC members, \$10 for others. Contact: Judy Pearl, 617-558-6508 or <jpearl@jccgb.org>

- Oct. 26 **Wild Work at Lynn Woods Reservation** Join a group of volunteers with and without disabilities at the Lynn Woods Reservation to clear brush and improve trails to make the area more accessible to people in wheelchairs. This event is free and lunch will be provided. For registration and accommodations call Outdoor Explorations at (781) 395-4999.
- Oct. 29 **Role Definition for Interpreters in a Church Setting**, presented by Anne Freeman of Vision New England Deaf Ministries (spoken English with ASL interpretation). Workshop is 10 - 4 at Apple Valley Worship Center in Southington, CT. Contact Anne Freeman at 617-325-3809 voice or <AnneFreema@aol.com>.
- Nov. 5 -6 **When Existing Jobs Don't Fit** is a two-day seminar on what to do when "pre-existing" job openings often do not meet the needs of individuals with significant disabilities. Attendees will learn how to work with employers to restructure jobs and maximize creativity in the job development process. Sponsored by Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI). Registration fee \$110. DEADLINE is 3 weeks prior to event. Contact Mandy Gehrig at 617-287-4337 voice, 617-287-4350 TTY, 617-287-4352 fax or at <amanda.gehrig@umb.edu>.
- Nov. 6 **MassRelay & Verizon Regional Community Forum**, 6 - 8 p.m. at Deaf Community Center, 75 Bethany Road in Framingham will provide information about MassRelay and Verizon Center for Customers with Disabilities phone services with demonstrations of new telephone equipment. The presentations will be conducted in ASL with voice interpretation. For more information call MassRelay Customer Service at 800-720-3479 voice/STS, 800-720-3480 TTY, or email outreach@massrelay.org. Presented in association with Verizon Center for Customers with Disabilities and other organizations serving people who are deaf, late-deafened, or hard-of-hearing.
- Nov. 6 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in group** (See earlier listing for October 2.)
- Nov. 7 **MassRelay Service Regional Community Forum**, 6 - 8 p.m. at New England Home for the Deaf, Thompson House, 154 Water Street in Danvers. (see Nov. 6 listing for details)
- Nov. 12-14 **Build Boston**, annual convention and tradeshow for anyone interested in design and the built environment. Exhibits and workshops are at the World Trade Center in Boston, 200 Seaport Blvd. Program includes eleven workshops on Universal Design. Register before Oct. 18 for FREE admission to exhibits. Sponsored by Boston Society of Architects. For more information call 800-544-1898 voice, 508-759-4552 FAX or log onto <www.buildboston.com>
- Nov. 13-14 **Community Access Monitor Training in Roxbury at the Reggie Lewis Center.** (See listing on Oct. 1-2 for details.)
- Nov. 14 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor conference room, 5:30 –7:00 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.
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Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community (continued)

Access Notice

The City of Cambridge does not discriminate on the basis of disability. This newsletter is available in electronic mail, large print and other alternative formats upon request. To add your name to our mailing list, to inquire about alternative formats, or for information about other auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

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AccessLetter is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,
part of the Department of Human Service Programs

51 Inman Street, second floor, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

We welcome your comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

Read past issues on our website: www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~CCPD

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